

Restoring the vine: The McIntosh family is getting back to the region's wine-making roots with their new vineyard in Lewiston Orchards

By JENNIFER K. BAUER

LEWISTON — At Lindsay Creek Vineyards, Lewiston's newest winery, the land that fostered the first wines in the Pacific Northwest more than a century ago plays a starring role.

Located on the eastern edge of the Lewiston Orchards, the winery's multiple picture windows and outdoor patio overlook sweeping wheat fields and a vineyard at the headwaters of Lindsay Creek. Spectacular sunsets and migrating flocks of birds are common sights.

It's also common for visitors to ask the founders if they came here from California; to which Art and Michelle and Doug and Brenda McIntosh laugh and explain, no. They are fourth-generation farmers committed to restoring Idaho's reputation as prime and beautiful grape-growing terrain.

Lindsay Creek Vineyards' tasting room and production facility was built in the middle of the McIntosh family's wheat fields with the thought that no one will build around them and spoil the pastoral view.

"It's about the experience," says Art McIntosh, 57. "We don't want it to be pretentious. We want people to be able to relax."

"And have fun," says his brother, Doug, 56.

Outdoors, a west-facing patio features a towering pergola where hop vines will offer shade in the summer. Inside, they serve their wine (currently cabernet sauvignon, Malbec, chardonnay and Riesling), beer and small plates of food in a modern, industrial-style tasting room and bar. Wine tasting is \$5. The building includes a conference room and a production facility that also functions as an event center accommodating up to 500 people. Upstairs a wood railing, notched for wine glass stems, illustrates the attention to detail.

Idaho's first grapes were planted in Lewiston in 1864. By 1872, Lewiston wines were winning gold awards in national competitions. The vineyard and creek are named for pioneer John N. Lindsay, who came to Lewiston in 1876 and established what was called one of the choicest orchards in the Inland Northwest at the creek's mouth, which flows into the Clearwater River east of downtown Lewiston.

Prohibition smothered Idaho's wine industry, which has experienced a revival over the last 15 years. Seeing the comeback and knowing the region's history with grapes, the McIntoshs began developing vineyards in 2007. Art and Doug certified in the enology and viticulture programs at Washington State University and worked with other Lewiston-Clarkston Valley winemakers to hone their skills. They now grow more than 15 acres of grapes representing about 10 varieties on what was formerly prime wheat-growing land.



The McIntosh family started their vineyard in 2007.



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The winery functions as an event center serving up to 500 people.

When the McIntosh brothers decided to become bonded to make wine they realized they needed a production facility. People were also requesting a tasting room.

“We knew this was a unique location because of the view,” says Art about the decision to build. A federal petition has been filed to make parts of Nez Perce, Latah, Lewis, Clearwater, Asotin, Garfield and Whitman counties its own distinct American Viticulture Area. If approved it would be called the Lewis-Clark Viticulture Area.

“That’s going to be a great thing for us and the other wineries here that are putting out great wine,” Art says. “It’s wine tourism. We feel that several more wineries would help keep people in the area.”

If you go

Lindsay Creek Vineyards

3107 Powers Ave., Lewiston

Regular hours at the winery will be from 5-9 p.m. Fridays, 1-9 p.m. Saturdays and 1-5 p.m. Sundays and by appointment by calling (208) 746-WINE (9463).

lcvineyards.com



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